BIAS AND EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

EXTENSION TRAINING
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MICHAEL STEWART

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FOREWORD

ONE of the objections most frequently made to education for citizenship is that we must avoid at all costs 'politics in the school'. People who take this view fear that it may be impossible to teach the facts of the contemporary world without a party bias, and that it is therefore better that they should not be taught at all.

The Association for Education in Citizenship[1] exists for the purpose of encouraging the training of young people in the many qualities which go to make a good citizen of a democracy. The Association considers this question of bias to be of the first importance, and accordingly appointed a committee consisting of experienced teachers to deal with the matter.

Mr. Michael Stewart, who has himself wide experience in the teaching of politics and economics, has written this pamphlet in close consultation with the Committee. He takes full responsibility for it. The Association regards the pamphlet, with which it is in general accord, as a valuable contribution to the solution of a difficult and important problem, and is, therefore, undertaking its publication; but it must not be held responsible for any particular statements or opinions therein. It should be added that the lines on page 46 which relate to the latitude for teachers to express in class their personal opinions on controversial political questions are included as representing a view which is in fact held by many teachers; but they do not express a conclusion for which the Association itself is in a position to accept responsibility, the point not having been considered specifically by its Council and Officers.

E. D. SIMON,
Chairman of the Association for Education in Citizenship.

EVA M. HUBBACK,
Honorary Secretary of the Association for Education in Citizenship.

[1] 10 Victoria Street, London, S.W. 1.

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I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Aims of Education—Totalitarian and Democratic

EDUCATION should help to equip those who receive it not only to earn their living and develop their faculties for their own pleasure, but also to become good citizens. This proposition would now gain universal acceptance; it is, in fact, in danger of becoming a statement of the type to which every one will give formal assent without inquiring too closely what it means or what action it implies. Many countries, however, have in recent years made it the first principle of their education systems and in so doing have given it a new and startling interpretation. All school-children in Germany, except those in the top classes of secondary schools, attend twice a week a 'national-political' lesson. There they are taught the superiority and special mission of the Germanic peoples; the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles are explained to them; the League of Nations appears as a device to keep Germany in subjection, the era of the German Republic as an era of shame and bondage from which Hitler has delivered his people. The ordinary school subjects, particularly history and biology, are so presented as to support these views.[1] In Russia, the normal history course traces the development of the class-conflict from the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution with its emancipation of the working-class; geography lessons serve to depict the varied resources of Soviet territory, and their successful exploitation by the Five-Year Plan; science appears as the liberator of mankind from the darkness of religion.

A good citizen is, on this view, one who believes the

[1] See 'Education and International Revelations' by Elizabeth Wiskemann (*Contemporary Review*, September 1937).

doctrines which those who rule his country wish him to believe. This definition, and the systems based on it, are alien to the conception of education held by teachers in this country; but it is none the less a definition. The teaching provided by dictatorships has a definite goal; the value of any subject is gauged by its usefulness in promoting what the dictator believes to be the welfare of the state. It is this certainty of aim which is a challenge to education in Britain and other democratic countries. Are our schools purposeless? Do they merit the criticism launched by Hitler at the schools of the German Republic, that they produce pupils whose knowledge is unrelated to their country's needs, and whose minds are adapted for argument but not for loyalty or constructive enthusiasm? If they deny this charge, what purpose or set of principles have they to set up against those which inspire the dictatorships? The problem, therefore, is to define good citizenship in a democracy, and to show how education can escape being an aimless pursuit of facts without becoming an instrument of propaganda.

A democracy requires its citizens to examine policy by free discussion and to determine it from time to time by majority vote; it then asks that the minority, so long as their own rights of criticism and peaceful opposition are preserved, should obey the law. Such a method of government can only work to full advantage if the citizens are well enough informed to be able to judge public affairs; if they can think clearly and without prejudice; and if each citizen recognizes that his fellows have the same right to their opinions as he to his, and is prepared to uphold the democratic method even when the policy he favours does not command assent from the majority. The qualities of the good democratic citizen include, therefore, knowledge, fairness, and tolerance. These qualities are essential in a democracy, just as belief in the duty of 'blind obedience' to the leader is essential in a dictatorship. But they are not merely the qualities

which serve the purpose of democracy. Knowledge and fairness promote the progress of human thought; respect for the lives and opinions of others promotes both happiness in the state and peace between states. Britain, in reasserting this standard of values for education, serves not only herself but the world.

Every state must consider how far the education of its citizens fits them to use their own laws and constitution. But a democracy has a special need for this education in the spirit of the constitution because democracy is the most difficult form of government. It requires from its citizens that they should be able both to discuss and to act; to disagree with and to respect each other. They must be loyal to the community, and critical of the government. They must, in addition to the management of their own affairs, pronounce judgement on great public questions. Many of them must take, voluntarily, an active part in administration. Nor can it be hoped that all will attain to the full democratic ideal of intelligent activity. But democracy is not only a method of government; the use of the the method promotes among citizens certain qualities—kindliness, tolerance, and enthusiasm for liberty—which are not wholly dependent on intellect. It is the task of education to see that the passion and enthusiasm, which youth always has and must somewhere bestow, are attached to the cause of the people's liberty.

The education of the totalitarian state also challenges that of Britain on the question of patriotism. The British school-child is taught to show respect and approval of the monarchy and other institutions symbolic of national unity, and to take part in ceremonies on certain days of national importance. It can be claimed that these observances are intended to encourage a feeling of self-sacrifice and public spirit. But does this spirit match in intensity the fierce nationalism of Germany and Italy, or the devotion to Stalin and the Soviet Fatherland inculcated in Russia? If British patriotism is not state-worship

and militarism, what is it? It is, or should be, a knowledge of, and admiration for, all those achievements of British people which have promoted the happiness of mankind; in particular, an admiration for those who have advanced the cause of liberty. The record of British history is not, of course, that of a smooth development of liberty; but it is true that the British people have shown a remarkable political genius, and that they have made great contributions to the growth of liberty throughout the world. For them, if for any people, love of liberty and love of country should be linked together. The patriot in Britain, believing that his country's gifts to civilization can stand comparison with those of any other, will not seek to dominate other nations, but to work with them on a basis of equality and fairness.

The Pursuit of Democratic Educational Objects

These propositions are obvious enough; they are common ground among all who have thought about education. But there are two reasons why they need to be emphasized at the present time. The first is that they answer the dictatorships' challenge, and are the proof that education without propaganda does not mean education without principle. The second is that educational practice has been greatly developed and improved in recent years. The quantity of education is increasing, the range of subjects has been widened, and methods of teaching are being reformed in the light of psychological discoveries. In view of this progress, how are the principles of democratic education to be applied?

Every part of a school's activity can help to develop the moral qualities of good citizenship. The organization of school discipline provides for the exercise of justice and such obedience as the general good requires; one of the objects of games is to encourage fairness and co-operation; discussions at meetings of school societies should promote tolerance and courtesy. Some classroom

teaching bears directly on principles of conduct, though British education does not as a rule carry this as far as the French system does. But the history of the post-war world shows very clearly that it is not enough merely to wish for the right solution of communal problems. The intellectual qualities of citizenship—knowledge and clearness of thought—also require development. For this task a good deal of factual teaching and training in self-expression is necessary. A desire to be fair, and a feeling of friendliness towards foreigners, are qualities required by any one who wishes to pronounce a sound judgement on the League of Nations; but he will not succeed in his purpose unless he is acquainted with the facts of the League's history. All school subjects contribute to the body of facts which the citizen requires; but, of necessity, the subjects most concerned are history, geography, economics, and politics. The last two also claim attention on the ground that they are comparatively new additions to the curriculum, and much has yet to be learned about the method of presentation. Some of the material of these subjects is controversial, and this fact, while it creates a problem for teachers, is in reality an added argument for teaching the subjects. History, economics, and politics can be so taught as to exclude disputed topics, but such presentation is not only dull but academically unsound, because it neglects an important part of the subject-matter. Properly handled, the teaching of the social sciences should equip the pupil to give intelligent judgement on current controversies.

Propaganda and Education

It is at this point that many teachers find a difficulty. They agree that education should have a standard of values; that it should promote good citizenship and include instruction in the facts of the modern world; but they are anxious that British education, in seeking to apply these principles, should not commit the fault for

which the totalitarian systems have been criticized. Further, both in the teaching profession and among the general public, there is a strong desire to exclude from education an evil variously described as 'propaganda', 'bias', and 'politics in the school'. It is not possible, immediately, to define the evil in more precise terms; for every one agrees that there are some things which children should be taught to believe—and does not this imply propaganda? The words 'propaganda' and 'politics' are by no means always used in a bad sense, but they are suspect in connexion with education. Examination of the problem will show that there are three or four distinct activities to which the phrases quoted above may refer, and that the teacher will take a different view of each.

i. *Non-Rational Propaganda.*

There is propaganda of the type which aims at securing acceptance for certain views by appealing to the emotions and neglecting the reason, and sometimes by the vilification of opponents. It will be convenient to distinguish this by the title of *non-rational propaganda.* Political speeches of this type are unfortunately common enough. The speaker ascribes to his opponents' policy every misfortune that occurs when they hold office; fortunate accidents occurring during his own party's rule are depicted as the natural result of their wisdom. Quotations torn from their context; tendencious choice of words; unscientifically selected statistics; and the patching of faulty argument by rhetoric are the accepted instruments of such a politician. This type of propaganda is undesirable, both in school and anywhere else in a democracy. Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, outlines in some detail the art of non-rational propaganda. For him, and for any one who regards the mass of mankind as incapable of self-government, it is a necessary tool; but this is exactly the view of humanity to which democrats cannot assent. Education in a democracy not only excludes this type of

propaganda, but tries to develop the pupils' minds so that they shall be proof against it. Politics is not the only field of non-rational propaganda; a large proportion of advertisement, though free from scurrility is equally free from reason, and lowers the general standard of intellectual honesty. Against these appeals also, education should be an antidote.

A frequent cause of the use of non-rational propaganda is bias in the mind of the propagandist. A biased person is one who is predisposed to reach a certain conclusion by considerations of personal advantage or other factors irrelevant to the issue, or because of certain habits of thought which he has never subjected to rational examination. It is exceedingly difficult to be free from bias—particularly for those who do propagandist work. A man may form opinions rationally on the available evidence; when further evidence appears he is afraid that he will lose prestige if he admits that he was mistaken, and is thus biased in favour of his earlier view. So common and so strong is this tendency that the terms 'unbiased propaganda' or 'rational propaganda' may appear self-contradictory. But in practice there is a real difference between the propagandist who strives to correct his bias by reason and self-examination and the propagandist who makes no such effort. Propaganda can be a justifiable activity; biased judgement is at all times to be avoided

Yet in the treatment of a subject, as distinct from the formation of judgements, a teacher must show some selection. In history, for example, one teacher will lay greater stress on constitutional, another on social, problems; one will have a special understanding of, and interest in, the medieval Church; another in the rise of working-class movements. Such selection may be called bias; yet it neither can nor should be removed; it is the element which gives life and colour to teaching.[1] But it is something about which the teacher has to exercise caution,

[1] See *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools*, chap. iii.

lest his special interest deprives the pupils of full understanding of the subject.

ii. *Rational Propaganda.*

Another type of propaganda seeks support for a given view by marshalling reasoned arguments in its support. Fortunately there are both politicians and advertisers who use this *rational propaganda*. Although its object is to support a cause, it differs widely from the non-rational propaganda previously described. The speaker will not express opinions unless he has made such examination of the facts as his time and ability permit; he will not take it as proved, that his opponents are knaves or fools; he will use emotional appeal, not as a substitute for argument, but to win enthusiasm for policies for which reasoned argument has been given.

(*a*) When rational methods are employed to propagate beliefs which represent the experience of the race—e.g. belief in the importance of cleanliness and honesty—the resulting activity is certainly part of education, and many people would not call it propaganda at all. The spreading, in this manner, of belief in liberty, justice, truth, and kindliness, the standards of conduct on which the future of civilization now depends, is justifiable and specially necessary at the present time. There is a danger that a sound principle may be advocated by inaccurate and dishonest methods: cleanliness, for example, may be inculcated by an indiscriminate ascription of all ill health to dirt. If the pupils ever become able to detect the faults of this method, they may be inclined to reject the conclusions. If, on the other hand, the method is successful, it will injure the reasoning powers of the pupils and make them amenable to similar treatment employed for less admirable ends.

(*b*) Rational methods can also be employed to propagate controversial views—e.g. Conservatism, Socialism, Liberalism. Such propaganda can properly be used by

political partisans among adults—it is one of the recognized instruments for forming opinion in a democracy. But it differs from impartial education because its purpose is to convince the audience of something, the truth of which is in dispute. It is not, therefore, an activity which the teacher should pursue with a class. In the first place, the majority of educational institutions receive support from public funds, and their use for partisan ends would be an injustice to certain sections of the public. In schools, as distinct from adult classes, there is a second and perhaps more serious objection. The immaturity of the child's mind and the limitations of its knowledge make it incapable of applying effective criticism even to rational propaganda. The teacher who takes advantage of these weaknesses instead of trying to develop the mind and widen the knowledge is guilty of a breach of trust. This conclusion should not be taken as condemning the practice, adopted by many schools, of inviting speakers from different political parties to put their views before some of the older pupils. So long as no favour is shown to one party, and regular schoolwork is not neglected, this practice will be of great assistance to sound education. It remains true, however, that ordinary lessons should not be used for propagating controversial opinions, even by rational methods.

iii. *Impartial Presentation of Controversial Topics.*

There is the impartial presentation of controversial questions. It should be observed that our system of education, by approving the school study of economics, the British constitution, and certain other subjects, has already implicitly required teachers to handle these questions, without which the study of the subjects is incomplete. The type of question set by examining bodies shows this even more clearly. But a more fundamental reason why the handling of controversy should be part of education is that the pupil cannot avoid contact with

disputed topics; he is frequently anxious to exercise his mind on them, and to form opinions. In this exercise, as in other exercises of mind and body, his teachers can give useful help. There is a clear distinction between this activity and propaganda. Even the most fair-minded propagandist is not expected to give the same weight to his opponent's case as he does to his own; he has reasons for the opinions he has formed, and his task is to put those reasons before his audience. The teacher, however, has to present all opinions. The propagandist's success is measured by the number of people who are induced to share his opinions; the teacher is successful in so far as his pupils understand what opinions are held by different parties, and why. A competent teacher will have no difficulty in keeping his lessons free from non-rational propaganda; the real problem for the conscientious teacher is how to handle controversial matter in a realistic and interesting way while excluding even rational propaganda. A teacher who propagates controversial views in his lessons is showing bias, however careful he may have been to base those views on evidence and reason.

From this analysis it appears that *propaganda must be kept out of education*, except when it is of the type described in (ii) (*a*), for which some will not consider propaganda the right word; but that this decision does not imply that the activities of politicians are undesirable in themselves, but only that they are not suitable for inclusion in teaching: and that there must be 'politics in the school' if the word politics is used in its proper sense, to mean the study of public affairs and public opinion concerning them. The phrase 'politics in the school' is in itself an example of non-rational propaganda —the use of a slogan to over-simplify an issue and to darken counsel.

These are the aims in view; it remains to discuss the content of education in such a way as to suggest how they may be achieved.

II

THE CONTENT OF EDUCATION

1. *Elementary Facts*

IN the early stages of education there are some statements which must be presented authoritatively as statements of fact. The proposition that $9 \times 7 = 63$ contains an undoubted truth about the meaning attached to words and symbols, and the sooner the pupil memorizes it the better. In the teaching of English and other languages the definitions of words and the rules of grammar must, up to a point, be similarly taught, but as the pupil proceeds to more advanced work the usefulness of memorizing statements diminishes. At first sight it might appear that a definition of the gold standard could be learnt by heart, while the advisability of using a gold standard is a matter of opinion. But in a world of manifold currency experiments the definition itself raises points for discussion. Even among beginners the use of authoritative statement has its dangers. A child accustomed to think that a French or Latin word 'means' a given English word will be hampered when he tries to make extensive use of those languages. It is convenient for children to be taught to recognize multiples of 9 and 11 by certain properties of the digits before the underlying reason is within their grasp; but a wide use of such 'tricks' may at a later stage interfere with a sound understanding of mathematics. These problems of method must be solved separately for each subject by those who have the requisite experience. They are mentioned here because they show that, although authoritative statement plays some part in education, it must be employed with caution and is no more than a prelude to the task of developing the reason. As the age of the pupils increases, so there is a decline in the proportion of attention devoted to the mere learning of facts.

2. *Rules of Behaviour*

Just as elementary facts must be taught in an authoritative manner, so the first rules of behaviour must be laid down as dogmas. For example, a child must learn, at an early age, not to play with fire and not to hurt other children. If, a little later in life, it shows a tendency to lie or steal, that tendency must be corrected. Whatever the methods which parents and teachers use for this purpose, they are attempting to make the child adopt certain standards of behaviour without proving their soundness by reasoned argument.

Not only is argument unsuitable; plain statement, also, is insufficient. Only to a very limited extent does a child receive orders, store them in its memory, and act on them as occasion arises. Its standards of conduct are derived from the example of the adults with whom it comes into contact, from the pictures it sees, and the stories it is told. Commercial advertisement and political propaganda have both realized the effect of pictorial, auditory, and dramatic representation on the mind, and when these methods are employed on adults to the exclusion of rational appeal, and to spread ideas which cannot be logically defended, they are objectionable. But where, as with young children, the rational approach is impossible, and the doctrines to be advanced have the weight of human experience behind them, it would be foolish to neglect methods which invention has put into our hands.

Future experience will probably disclose a number of ways in which this conclusion can be applied to education. For the present, four profitable lines of action may be mentioned. First, the continued study of the educational possibilities of broadcasting. Second, co-operation between the teaching profession and the film industry; the necessity for this has already been recognized by both parties. Third, the consideration of the kind of books provided for the use of young children. Fourth, the use of dramatic work among children, not only—as is some-

times done in history lessons—to help them memorize facts, but to present values. These suggestions may not seem new; indeed, the desire to point a moral has been so strong among those who write children's books and plays, that teachers and children alike have often grown weary. It is not, however, the desire for a moral, but the methods of presentation which have been at fault. All too frequently the presence of a moral has been allowed to excuse the absence of any literary or artistic merit. Books, plays, and films for children should be the work of those who are skilled in their craft. Further, they should lay emphasis on those aspects of right conduct which appeal most to children; kindness should appear in its positive aspect of generosity and cheerfulness rather than in the negative guise of self-denial.

These methods make the promotion of right conduct attractive and interesting; but they are still authoritarian in that they take certain standards for granted. If it is therefore objected that they are non-rational propaganda, the answer is simple necessity. The happiness of the child itself and of those with whom it comes into contact depends on the observance of these rules; the habit of observance must be formed before the child is capable of appreciating arguments. But the justification for dogmatic instruction in behaviour ends when the necessity ends—that is to say, when the child begins to inquire why it should behave in a particular way, and is able, at any rate in part, to understand the answer. A definition, in language or mathematics, is a statement in the indicative mood, and the idea of proof has no relevance to it. But the rules of behaviour 'Be kind', 'Be truthful', 'Be industrious', are imperatives, to all of which the question 'Why should I?' may properly be put. If this question is met by reassertion, in an attractive form, many of the children will accept what they are told and their critical and rational faculties will atrophy. When they are older they will lack any defence against other less praiseworthy

doctrines. If any crisis in later life leads them to doubt what they have been taught, then, having no power to analyse their beliefs, they may reject them entirely and replace them with whatever seems to suit best their immediate needs. Nor is the injury confined to the individual. A community which transmits its rules of conduct solely by authoritative teaching will make no progress towards a sounder moral judgement. A dogmatic assertion that we should be kind to the weak and afflicted may be met with the counter-assertion that we should destroy them in the interests of race-fitness. But if criticism and discussion of the former assertion is permitted, there is hope of erecting a standard of kindliness without allowing it to degenerate into sentimentality. Few people in the eighteenth century saw the need for kindness to the insane; to-day the practical implications of kindness to criminals are in dispute. By free discussion the rules of morality can be saved from being pious aspirations and can be applied to practical problems. To take another example, should a child be taught to be industrious simply on the ground that industry will make it rich? If so, it is both deceived and taught to regard its own advantage as the criterion of right conduct. But there is no need for moral teaching to become degraded and inaccurate if those who have the care of children will submit their own maxims to the test of argument. Therefore, while every one admits the absurdity of conducting ethical argument with a child of two, it does appear that rules of behaviour are proper subjects for discussion. Any desire which a growing child displays to ask why it should behave in a given manner is a desire to be encouraged.

3. *Development of the Power of Rational Criticism*

The Critical Faculty.

There is one consideration which might prove a bar to the acceptance of the conclusions just reached.

Admirable as the effect of reasoned criticism on morality may be, the attempt to practise it gives opportunity for quibbling and pointless argument. There will be no advantage, if education, in the effort to avoid bias, becomes an encouragement to hair-splitting. The proper use of the critical powers, the ability to think logically, need to be developed in the pupil, with the teacher's help. The task begins at a comparatively early stage in education and bulks larger as the pupils grow older, till in adult education it is often regarded as the chief object of class discussions. It will be suggested later that criticism has been developed in adult education at the expense of the constructive faculties; but this does not disprove the necessity for criticism. It is not only a training for citizenship but essential to the scholarly understanding of any subject. This pamphlet has been concerned with the former of these objectives—that of enabling future citizens to subject political propaganda to reasoned analysis; the most obvious method is to encourage questioning, discussion, and self-expression in the teaching of the social sciences themselves. When history is studied in this way, the pupil learns that judgement cannot be pronounced until evidence has been examined. From the study of human actions and motives in the past, he learns how men can be swayed by motives that they will not acknowledge, even to themselves; and this understanding of human nature can be applied to the present. He sees also that wisdom and honourable conduct are not the monopoly of those who hold a particular set of opinions —and hence, that invective without argument does not help the search for truth. He becomes aware of the need for intellectual honesty: for history will show him that men cannot be just and fair-minded merely because they recognize the moral value of those qualities: they must also have the patience and ability to pursue facts and weigh evidence. When economics and public affairs are taught in school the method of discussion is imperative

if any real progress is to be made. Many teachers of these subjects take the view that, though they do contain a useful body of facts, their chief value is that they train the pupil to discover the political and social bias in his own mind, and to remove it. From history and economics—and indeed from other subjects not classified as social sciences—the pupil can learn the nature of fair argument and the difference between sound and unsound methods of proof. He may thus become aware—perhaps for the first time—that there is such a thing as propaganda, and that care is required to distinguish between its rational and irrational forms.[1] In all these three subjects, pupils can be encouraged to pursue particular lines of work on their own, and later, describe to the class their discoveries and consequent opinions. Such self-expression will no doubt involve the expression of much crude thought; but as one teacher points out: 'Nor is it undesirable that the young pupil should spend some time merely arguing in circles or letting off "hot air". This has great educational value, as, after a short while, the more critical minds get tired of "hot air" and desire to get to grips with the problems more closely. This is particularly true of the more mature people between 17½ and 18. This is a salutary conclusion to which to get the young person before he leaves school.'[2]

Criticism and the Teacher's Authority.

How does the freedom which work of this character requires affect the authority of the teacher? First, there is authority as a disciplinarian. If discipline is preserved by keeping the class in constant awe of the teacher, they are not likely to learn from him the use of criticism in intellectual matters. To-day, however, the general view is that the best disciplinarian is he who least needs to emphasize discipline. If the school rules are sensible

[1] *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools*, chap. vii.
[2] Ibid., chap. v, pp. 48–9.

and the teacher capable of establishing friendly relations with the class, politeness is taken for granted, nor will it occur to any pupil to make disagreement over the subject-matter of a lesson an opportunity for challenging the teacher's authority over discipline. This problem becomes negligible in the highest classes at school, and is non-existent in adult education. Secondly, there is authority as an organizer of the work. A certain amount of ground has to be covered in a given time, both on account of examinations, and to obtain a balanced view of the subject. The teacher must, therefore, act as a chairman, keeping the discussion within the limits of the time-table. If the class know, from the start, the proposed syllabus, they will appreciate the need for restriction, and try to make the best use of the time available for discussion. Thus they learn to avoid idle argument —a training which will be of great value when, in later life, they try to do any kind of co-operative or committee work. Thirdly, a teacher must, to some extent, be an authority on facts, but he neither needs nor should feign omniscience. Part of his work is to transmit to the pupils, in a suitable form, facts which they have not the ability to seek out from other sources; but he should also encourage them to pursue knowledge independently, as their powers develop. He can draw their attention to the connexion between his own subject and others about which they may be better informed than he. Respect for the teacher's knowledge need not be diminished by the realization that there is an infinite field beyond. For example, the class may safely take the teacher's word for the date of the Battle of Hastings or the contents of the Petition of Rights; nor will his authority on these and similar questions suffer if he admits that both his own, and all human knowledge of social conditions in the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, is imperfect. His teaching, even among junior children, will gain in interest and accuracy if he tells them something about

the sources from which knowledge may be sought, and the reason for lack of certainty.

The development of a critical attitude in the social sciences should not, therefore, conflict with the proper exercise of a teacher's authority. Difficulty arises only if it is assumed that because a teacher must be obeyed he must also be regarded as infallible.

Transfer of Reasoning Power.

The power of rational criticism can be developed in many other subjects. The pupil who failed to develop it would, for example, make little progress in the natural sciences. A grasp of the grammar and syntax of a language depends on an ability to use analogy correctly and to see the application of general rules. Teachers of languages and natural science will want to develop the critical faculty for the sake of those subjects themselves. Are the subjects also useful as a training-ground? Can the reasoning power which they develop be transferred to political and social problems? Before the twentieth century there was a widespread belief that the transfer could be made; subjects whose utility in themselves was questionable were defended on the ground that they were good mental training. This belief was based on a false analogy between the powers of the mind and the muscles of the body; perhaps, also, many teachers were induced to hold it by their vested interest in Greek and Latin, for the latter of which the claim was most commonly made. During this century, however, the doctrine of transfer has been subjected to vigorous experiment and criticism. From experiments made with groups of pupils evidence appeared that inherent powers are not increased by exercise, but that facts, methods, and attitudes of mind which had been learnt in one subject could, to a slight extent, be applied in others. Such transfer usually occurred between subjects whose common elements could not fail to be noticed by the pupils—e.g. Latin and

Spanish. Is there, then, a 'power of rational criticism' in general, or is there one power of reasoning in geometry, and a distinct power of reasoning in economics? More recent experiments suggest that we should not be justified in forming this conclusion on the basis of present evidence. Much greater transfer of reasoning may be possible if the method of teaching is adapted to that end. Thus, a class which learns in a biology lesson the nature of a controlled experiment can have the idea illustrated by examples of controlled experiments in education. Conversely, one of the hindrances in the study of the social sciences—the enormous difficulty of arranging controlled experiments—can be made plain by depicting the advantages possessed by biology in this respect. The importance of definitions to physics and economics can be demonstrated by a discussion of the criteria of, and methods of arriving at, a good definition. Teachers have frequently made the discovery that a pupil who finds a subject dull will take greater interest when he sees the similarity of its methods to those of other subjects. It now appears from experiment that this interrelation of subjects, in method as well as content, not only aids each subject but makes transfer of reasoning more probable. Mr. R. Palmer, in the Introduction to his book *Living Things*, states the matter as follows:

'I am inclined to think that if we would have transfer of training in scientific method we must provide training in transfer. In other words, a child should be taught to recognize the logical shape of a problem irrespective of its factual content. To do this properly would demand a closer relation between the teaching of different school "subjects" than exists at present, but a beginning may perhaps be made with a single subject. In this chapter I have discussed very simply and informally the main types of inductive inference, using as examples experiments which the child has already performed. . . . This chapter will not appeal to every child, and there are few, perhaps, who will long retain any reproducible knowledge of the types of induction. It is, however, possible that the

repeated focussing of attention upon antecedents and consequents and the conditions of proof may lead to greater caution and clarity in the interpretation of facts in other fields.'

If this suggestion is to bear fruit, there is need, not only for co-operation between subjects but for wide knowledge on the teacher's part. But in view of the possibility of making transfer in reasoning a reality, the effort would be worth while.

This handling of education has a greater purpose than could be served by the teaching of Logic as a distinct subject. The work of Dr. Thouless and Mr. Jepson, in showing how accurate thinking can be taught at school, is well known. Both, however, take the view that the training must be given by the use of familiar subject-matter.

> 'It cannot be too strongly emphasized' [writes Dr. Thouless] 'that to introduce into schools the teaching of logic and psychology as "subjects" would be a retrograde step. The new subject must be accurate thinking, with so much logic and psychology as is necessary for this purpose. In all respects, the pedantic method of approach is to be avoided, the subject-matter of the study is to be problems of current interest, not the mortality of Socrates or the mind-body problem. Our object must be to create citizens intelligently approaching the problems of their citizenship and not either young logicians or psychologists.'[1]

Further, the chief value of this work is defensive; it counteracts the force of mass suggestion and enables the pupil to detect prejudice, false analogy, and verbal trickery. Mr. Palmer's aim is to make the pupil conscious, in a variety of subjects, of the means to positive knowledge. The reasoning powers should be used, not only to appraise the value of arguments, but to handle facts.

The Limits of Criticism.

Discussion of the development of criticism has thus

[1] *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools*, chap. xvi, p. 235.

itself led to the conclusion that criticism is not enough. The same powers which are required for rational criticism serve also to construct policy out of facts. If an undue proportion of effort is spent in encouraging criticism, education may produce only sceptics or persons without the power of decision. In view of the large part played by critical discussion in adult education, special importance attaches to the opinion recently expressed by Mrs. Wootton, the Director of Studies for the University of London Tutorial Classes. Mrs. Wootton notes that students of economics, politics, and allied subjects complain that educational experience 'doesn't get you anywhere'. They come to the classes in the belief that they will obtain knowledge which will help to decide what their attitude to urgent problems of public affairs should be. They find that the tutor is able to provide many reasons for doubting the wisdom of any policy; but he usually shrinks from offering constructive proposals, based on his own knowledge. The student is inclined, either to cleave to his previously formed opinions, deciding that the tutor's specialized knowledge has no bearing on real life, or to adopt the teacher's negative attitude. The evils of the latter result are graphically described by Mrs. Wootton:

'. . . continued scepticism is liable to introduce paralysis of the will. The habit of analysis without construction, of one-sided concentration upon difficulties, of taking "pros" for granted and ruthlessly routing out every possible "con" that may have escaped immediate attention—this habit insidiously induces a divorce between education and life that ultimately deprives the former of all real vitality. In life one has both to do things and to believe things, and if one has sought education in order to make one's beliefs more accurate and one's actions more fruitful, it is a bitter pill to find that the only result is that one's beliefs are destroyed and one's power of action undermined! But this is just what has happened to those who lament that they "get nowhere"; . . . one of the chief results of contemporary education is

merely to enhance the subject's fear of being, or doing, wrong.'[1]

The similarity between this criticism and that advanced by Hitler against democratic education is striking. Give the ordinary citizen freedom in choice of government, says the Dictator, and he will create chaos; give him freedom of discussion in education and he will be entangled in a web of doubt. But while Mrs. Wootton and Hitler both diagnose over-scepticism, their agreement ends at that point. Hitler, with characteristic directness, attributes the disease to Jewish influence and prescribes obedience to himself as the cure. Mrs. Wootton points out the influence of the Socratic tradition, fixed in the older Universities and spreading thence over the greater part of our education. Among the reasons for its survival she notes two which are creditable enough—the wish to differentiate education from propaganda, and the power of the Socratic method to make the student immune from mass-suggestion. But while scepticism may thus be proved a necessary part of education, it is not proved to be the only necessary part. Another reason Mrs. Wootton described thus:

'Our respect for the purely sceptical method of treatment has, I think, largely flourished on an entirely mistaken identification of action with dogmatic certainty. There is very little certainty in most human studies, at least, as yet. There are loopholes even in the most fundamental propositions, and it is eminently proper that we should refrain from putting forward as established certainties, propositions which cannot be proven by any kind of proof that satisfies most of us of the truth of the statement that two and two make four. But to suppose that uncertainty must preclude action is palpably ridiculous. We should all be dead long ago if we had applied this theory to life outside the lecture room. Every day we have to commit ourselves, in our personal lives, to courses of action as to the consequences and merits of which we have

[1] 'A Plea for Constructive Teaching' (*Adult Education*, Dec. 1937), pp. 96–7.

only the most inadequate data; and every day we find that it pays us, on the whole, to use the best of our intelligence upon such data as we can get, rather than to plump blindfold for whatever alternative happens to come first. But the art of acting courageously and vigorously on a working hypothesis, and at the same time keeping our eyes open for evidence that may demand that the hypothesis should be revised, and the action consequently modified, is an extremely difficult one; and we are, moreover, only just beginning to realize the important role that this art ought to play in the conduct of social affairs. Surely it should be one of the major tasks of adult education (and indeed of all education) in humanistic studies to emphasize the distinction between intellectual uncertainty and practical impotence, and to help us to acquire the mental attitude which dissociates these effectively.'[1]

In these words is contained a further task for democratic education; the citizen must learn not only how to think for himself but how to act for himself; and Mrs. Wootton makes the further comment that

'. . . for a teacher to discuss any practical problem without in the end indicating what he himself thinks the best way of tackling it, is incompetent and irresponsible teaching.'

4. *Development of the Constructive Faculties*

General Considerations.

At this point it will be convenient to review the conclusions which have been reached. The first merit of education in a democracy is that it seeks to produce citizens who can form opinions on disputed matters, rather than to provide them with a set of opinions approved by the government. With this end in view the power of rational criticism is developed from the time when the pupil's age first permits, and finds its fullest exercise in adult education. It then appears that democratic education cannot avoid the reproach of being amoral, ineffective, and lacking in patriotism unless it has a positive content. Examples of such content have been

[1] Ibid., pp. 102–3.

given, applicable both to young children and to adults, and ranging from, say, an injunction not to pull pussy's tail, or a reading of the *Water Babies*, to the framing of practical economic policy. The child, before he begins to reason, has standards of conduct presented to him *by* some one else; the adult can frame his standards together *with* some one else, and after he has used his reasoning powers. But at all ages the need for positive content arises from the fact that we live in a world where action is necessary—action which has to be based not on certainty but on reasonable probability. The task now is to examine in detail the process of developing the constructive faculties, and to review again the stages of education with this object in mind.

Accurate observation is a necessary prelude to constructive action, and the habit of observation is one which can be encouraged at an early age. Children can be persuaded to be on the look-out for anything in newspaper pictures, films, and advertisements which relates to matter dealt with in school, and to talk about their discoveries in class. This practice, simple as it is, accustoms the children to think of education as something which can be used in everyday life, and makes them keen to search out as many facts as they can about any problem. Wise selection of the objects to be painted or modelled in art lessons will lead the child to see the value of using its eyes and its imagination outside as well as inside the art-room. At the same early age, children can be trained to act, dramatizing the material of their reading books and history lessons and everyday life. This has a value quite apart from the obvious training in speech and self-confidence. When a play has to be framed and acted the children have to make decisions for themselves; in the choice of matter they have not only to weigh pros and cons but also to make the choice which seems to them most advantageous. They thus learn unconsciously, as a normal fact of life, the necessity for decision and action. As they grow older

they will be able without difficulty, and as a natural development, to organize their own school activities.

For school-children of all ages the subjects taught can be presented in a manner which shows their importance to the life of mankind. Reference has already been made to the need for co-operation between teachers of different subjects so that similarities of method may be made plain to the pupils. Similar co-operation is desirable to demonstrate the common factor in the content of subjects—namely, that the purpose of all of them is the advancement of human welfare. The suggestions which follow are intended to show the possibilities of some of the subjects in this direction.

Particular Subjects.

i. *Geography.* Geography does not lend itself so easily as history, politics, or economics to the development of the critical faculties, but it shows very plainly the practical purpose of knowledge. The study of the child's own neighbourhood helps him to understand why the people there try to make their living in a particular way, and what are the difficulties they encounter. He begins to grasp some of the problems which the local council has to solve, and the need to frame a policy on town-planning or transport which shall reconcile the often conflicting claims of beauty, health, and convenience. The same problems appear on a larger scale when the geography of the British Isles is studied. The situation and resources of Britain appear both as factors which limit the choice of government policy and as opportunities calling for constructive action. Policies for agriculture and aviation, for housing and water-supply, are examples. The study of the world as a whole shows it first as a treasure-house for mankind whose resources can only be fully exploited when the separate nations not only refrain from war, but take positive action for the increase of international trade and the fruitful direction of investment. The more advanced

stages of geography are thus linked with economics. The influences of mountains, rivers, and other physical features on the movement of people and the formation of national groups can be shown, and from this the pupil will acquire a better understanding of the problems and feelings of foreigners. International rivalry and hatred will no longer seem something incomprehensible that can only be deplored, but the result of real difficulties which will, however, yield to constructive treatment. Frequently, those people who remember their school Geography lessons with distaste do so because they were required to memorize a large body of facts—e.g. lists of gulfs and bays—which seemed to have no human significance. The memory can be more profitably employed on the facts of size and density of population, and the occupations of the people.[1] The method of pictorial statistics, which was extensively developed by the Staff of the Social and Economic Museum of Vienna, will probably prove of great assistance.

ii. *Natural Science.* If one aspect of geography—its presentation of the world as man's treasure-house—be considered, the natural sciences, physics, chemistry, and biology, appear as instruments wherewith mankind can put its treasures to the most effective use. Sir Percy Nunn has remarked that a child is first drawn to knowledge through a naïve delight in that which is wonderful; during adolescence appears a further motive, the desire to know what use can be found for any body of knowledge. The applications of scientific discovery to industry are too obvious to require emphasis, and no teacher would fail to point them out. It is not enough, however, to show how a discovery has enriched the discoverer or those who financed him. There are also to be considered its effects on the occupations, incomes, and health of large communities, and the consequent problems for the legislator. At the present time there is much discussion about the

[1] *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools*, chap. vi.

effects of mechanized production on wealth and employment; and about the perils to civilization inherent in the military use of scientific research. These discussions often suffer from being carried on by people who have little knowledge of the real possibilities; it should be the peculiar function of the teacher of science to remedy this evil. He cannot, of course, provide complete solutions to problems whose complexity is a chief cause of the difficulty of modern government. But he can equip his pupils to avoid the more serious errors of fact and reasoning, and can help them in the search for evidence. References to current problems are frequently made in science lessons as examples of facts and laws. This treatment is insufficient; it implies that the solution of the problems of mankind is only an appendage to science; the pupil is not enlightened as to what the purpose of scientific knowledge is, and may well be inclined to think that it is the passing of examinations. If science is treated at the outset as a body of knowledge by which mankind can help itself, enough interest can surely be aroused among the pupils to make them treat examinations as they should be treated—something to be taken in one's stride and useful as a record of progress made.

There has been mentioned, as an important constructive faculty, the power of acting on reasonable probability in the light of the available knowledge. Science can help in the development of this power if it is presented, not as a system of certainties, but as a method of drawing the most likely conclusions from the observed facts, and being prepared to act on those conclusions, while remaining aware that a high likelihood is not a certainty and that the most likely conclusions have to be revised in the light of fuller knowledge. The history of scientific thought and of its practical applications shows how mankind has got good results from combining the critical and constructive faculties in this manner.

The social importance of biology is now being realized

by large numbers of people. Population, public health, and food-supply are three vital problems to the solution of which this science makes a special contribution. If these aspects of biology are shown to the pupils, the subject becomes a good vocational training for those who intend to be doctors or members of certain branches of the public service; it also increases the number of citizens capable of appreciating the need for public health regulations and pronouncing judgement on policy. It is the experience of most schools that the natural sciences make a stronger appeal to boys than to girls: when the school study of biology and of its connexions with food, health, and domestic problems is extended, this position may be changed.

(iii) *Mathematics.* Mathematics has been described by Professor Hogben as the mirror of civilization. Every advance in the art of government has required the increased use of mathematics and the development of new branches of it. From the earliest stages the pupil is helped to the understanding of general rules by means of examples, the subject-matter of which is chosen with the intention of showing the relation of mathematics to life. The relation need not be only to individual and household problems, but to collective welfare. As the pupil masters increasingly difficult kinds of technique there is progress from the simple arithmetic of rates and taxes to the more advanced problems of public debts, social insurance, banking, and the proper use of statistics.

(iv) *Language.* The study of English literature and of the classical and modern languages is usually held to bear more on the happiness of the individual himself than on collective problems. To judge a literary work by the public-spiritedness of the sentiments it contained would be an absurdity. The pupil should of course be provided with historical data relevant to the period of literature which he is studying; but the subject is unduly narrowed if this is allowed to interfere with his appre-

ciation of the beauty of language. There is, however, the opposite error of divorcing writing from action, and encouraging in the adolescent the belief that those who can contemplate and admire literature are a kind of aristocracy, the difficulties of human life being beneath their notice. Such an attitude is inimical to the full appreciation of literature itself. Poetry is the expression of feeling, and the movement of public events is a potent cause of the disappointments and aspirations which poets have expressed. Some types of prose—that of Lamb for example—are most noted for the author's skill with words and light touch on ideas; but such writing, except when it comes from the pen of a master, easily degenerates into verbosity. Works such as *Areopagitica* and the *Advancement of Learning* had a definite public purpose, and that fact certainly does not detract from their literary value. The syllabus of post-School Certificate examinations might give more consideration to this latter kind of writing, for it contains some of the finest examples of the use of the English language.

With other texts, such as are studied by the majority of secondary school children, much depends on presentation. The public purpose of much of Shelley's and Wordsworth's writing, the light thrown on present problems by Shakespeare's perception of human character, the social significance of Jane Austen's picture of a comfortable class—the presentation of these, and of much else, gives wide scope for imaginative and well-informed teaching. The training of children to master their own language is of first importance. If the citizen is to make to public life a contribution commensurate with his abilities he must be able to express himself clearly and attractively. The teacher, returning pupils' essays, has often to criticize the tendency to pursue literary effect without regard to content or meaning. The pupil is likely to write better and to read more appreciatively when he realizes that the purpose of prose

is to express a meaning to the reader, and that it has been and can be used for the advancement of human welfare.

Mention has been made earlier of the problem of transfer of reasoning power. But the exact and critical use of one's own language is so powerful an aid to reasoning on any topic, that its value as training in citizenship cannot be questioned. It is this which gives English a notable place among the school subjects which contribute to civic education.

Conclusions.

No attempt has been made to survey all the possibilities of the curriculum. In these suggestions attention has been concentrated on those subjects which at first sight appear not to have an immediate bearing on public policy. The social sciences, for example, have not been examined in this connexion because their application is obvious; if they are not taught as subjects which increase our power of collective action they are not being taught at all. Objection might be made that what is proposed is that the teaching of science, language, and the rest, should be biased—given, that is to say, a slant towards the idea of human welfare, which would injure their orderly presentation. Several points may be made in reply. First, that the proposals make no claim to be a complete philosophy of education. They are deliberately selected to deal with aspects and methods of teaching which the present world situation requires us to consider, and which are not always given their proper value. Second, that they do not hinder, but help the understanding of each subject in itself. An elementary arithmetic book whose examples referred to imaginary and far-fetched situations would not only lack social purpose; it would be a bad arithmetic book, failing to command the pupil's attention. The preoccupation of Archimedes with the royal crown is of some interest; but it does not draw the pupil's attention to the displacement of water as effectively as

would a reference to a loading of ships and the Plimsoll line. Finally, if the purpose of knowledge is not the advancement of human welfare, what is it? There must be some criterion by which serious knowledge is distinguished from the trivial. The democracies, by making human welfare that criterion, set up a standard which dwarfs the narrow purpose of totalitarian education.

5. *Promotion of the Democratic Virtues*

The Democrat's Patriotism.

Here lies the fundamental difference between totalitarian and democratic education. It is not that the former has a purpose while the latter has none, nor that the former trains citizens to be obedient and useful to the state while the latter encourages them to think too much of themselves and to waste their energies in argument. The purpose of the former is state-worship; and the totalitarian state is a Leviathan which swallows up the individual and, in its dealings with other states, knows no law but its own desires. This, if anything, is the practical significance of Mussolini's phrase 'the state is a spiritual entity'. The purpose of democratic education is human welfare. It recognizes that the state is not an entity distinct from the individuals who compose it, and worthy of worship, but an organization framed by individuals and fit to be used by them for economic and social purposes, and for the reason that the individual can only develop his personality to the full when he lives in society. It holds that the state is not enriched, but impoverished, if the individual is deprived of his critical faculties, and if his constructive powers are directed only as the government sees fit. It sees also that both the honour and the advantage of the state lie not in its power to impose its will on other states, but in its willingness and ability to co-operate with them and make its peculiar contribution to the progress of the human race.

This is the patriotism which democratic education

seeks to promote. Patriotism has been defined in many ways; but through all the definitions, two ideas may be traced—first, that the individual should recognize the claim which his country has on his service, second, that whatever his goodwill towards mankind as a whole, he should feel a special affection for his own country. For the democrat, service to his country means service to the other individuals who are fellow subjects with him. Because his service is thus connected with living persons and not with an abstraction, it is not rendered only in a military form, nor only at times of national crisis; it is a permanent desire to act, according to his ability, in ways which will benefit his fellow subjects. Despite the sacrifice of leisure, comfort, and sometimes life, which such service may entail, the patriotism of a democrat is not, primarily, self-denial. On the contrary, it is self-realization; the individual is not required to abandon the use of any of his faculties, least of all the faculty of independent thought; in fact, he cannot serve the state fully without the use of this and all other faculties. As to the second, or nationalist element in patriotism, the democrat is not required to accept untenable propositions about the superiority of his own people over all others, in the manner of Don Quixote championing Dulcinea. He does, however, realize that his ways of life and thought have been profoundly influenced by the language, institutions, and history, and even by the climate and scenery of his native land; for this reason the section of mankind which he can serve best is his own nation, and his service will be useful according as his love and understanding are profound.

Because democratic patriotism is broader and more rationally based than chauvinism, it is not, when fully developed, any the less capable of moving the individual to serve his country. The promotion of it among children is, however, a more difficult task; for the teacher cannot rely solely on repetition and the inculcation of obedience;

all the faculties must be developed. Where, as among young children, the methods are almost entirely those of ceremonies and the telling of stories about national heroes, it is important that the children should understand in what way the event they are celebrating, or the person of whom they read, brought happiness to his fellows or caused other nations to look with gratitude and admiration towards Britain. It is now generally recognized that at one time too much emphasis was laid on service in war. Since every one earnestly hopes that the children of this generation will not be required to render that service, exclusive use of military examples will not make plain the fact that patriotism is a virtue which should be practised at all times and is within the reach of every one. At a later stage the presentation of subjects as instruments to human welfare will show the many possible forms of patriotic service. History and the study of politics and the constitution have a special usefulness. They help the citizen to that understanding of the forces which have fashioned his environment and character, from which love of country springs. They show that at all times, both in the past and the present, the constitution of his country is capable of improvement; that it has been improved by those who have devoted themselves to the task; and that his country requires of him not only appreciation of her merits but determination to increase them. The institutions of a democracy are intended for the benefit of its citizens, and the most valuable form of respect for our constitution is a resolve to use it and to continue the historic task of adapting it to changing problems. The examples of history demonstrate that a man may love and serve his country all the better because he does not attribute to it either infallibility or perfection. Moreover, these subjects, together with geography and economics, illustrate the truth that the wealth of every country is increased, and its culture enriched, by intercourse with fellow nations.

Is Democratic Education Propagandist?

The promotion of the democratic virtues does not mean, then, the appearance in the time-table of a 'patriotic hour' or the framing of a list of propositions to be learnt by heart. It follows from the nature of the educational process. If the reader approves the description already given of the content of education, he thereby expresses the view that children and adults should be taught to think independently and logically, to be capable of judgement and decision, and to respect the rights of others. By taking that view he sets himself in opposition to the dictatorships, for people who are brought up on these lines can serve a democracy, but will be inconvenient to a dictator. In order to show that teachers in Britain should train their pupils to be good citizens of a democracy, it has not been necessary to impose orders on education from outside; it has been enough to put to educationists the question, what are they trying to do? The answer has led directly to the promotion of the democratic virtues. This result is not coincidence; it arises from the natures of the two opposed forms of government. The democratic citizen has the privilege and responsibilities of freedom; he is required to decide public policy and accept the consequences of his choice. The dictator relieves his subjects of this burden and so deprives them of the full exercise of their minds. In effect, democracy treats its citizens as adults; dictatorship claims that, in public affairs, they must remain infants. Now the aim of the teacher is to fit his pupils for adult life; to see that they get so much enjoyment from using their minds that they will not fear responsibility. Only democracy permits the whole-hearted pursuit of this aim.

The conclusion that it is the teacher's duty to promote the democratic virtues can now be examined in the light of the principles concerning propaganda and bias laid down in the first section of this pamphlet. It was there

argued that education should encourage adherence to those rules of behaviour which have the experience of the human race behind them. The democratic standards fall into this class. In so far as freedom of thought is forbidden, new ideas cannot emerge. Whatever impetus the enthusiasm of the dictatorship may give to society at first, there is no continuous springing-up of new thought to give society flexibility and the power to adapt itself to changing circumstances. If justice and kindness are denied to those who do not share the government's views, opposition will vanish and the State will achieve an impressive unity and power of swift action. But the standard of morality so established will be fatal to society. Death and imprisonment become the regular answers to criticism. The government's only claim to allegiance is its power to enforce it ; if the discontented seek to overthrow the government by craft and by force they are only applying the lesson which they have been taught. In international relations, the doctrine that power is virtue is equally disastrous. Once it is accepted, peace will be preserved only as long as no state considers that war will bring it some immediate advantage. There is, then, a real sense in which it may be said that the democratic standards are those on which civilized government depends. This does not mean that the present condition of all dictatorships is barbarous, or that all democracies are well governed. The majority of the dictator's subjects may hold that he has conferred many blesssings on them. But it is still true that he has cut them off from the in-influences which preserve society and sweeten life ; their state has no inherent principle of virtue and is headed for barbarism. It is this which justifies the democratic standards. That it is better to be free than to give blind obedience to any one ; that justice is not merely the advantage of the stronger ; that truth must be sought by reason, not identified with the utterances of a dictator ; that kindness must be shown not only to those who hold

approved views—these are statements which should be commended to the pupils' acceptance as surely as any proposition of mathematics. Nor are they mere platitudes. They are exactly the standards which dictatorships deny, and which, by their control of education, they seek to root out of the mind.

It has also been argued that all propositions, however certain their truth and however admirable their sentiment, should be presented by reasoned argument as soon as the pupil is capable of appreciating that method. The promotion of democratic virtues must satisfy this condition. Teachers are not asked to advocate democracy by the methods of dictatorship—e.g. by vilifying the dictators and omitting or slurring over facts which democrats find unpalatable. The teacher who is dealing with history or public affairs will point out that in practice many democracies have fallen short of their own standards. Communities enjoying democratic rights among themselves have denied elementary rights to subject peoples in their empires. In their foreign relations they have failed to accord to other nations the consideration and justice which their citizens displayed to each other at home. Failure to understand that freedom means responsibility has brought about that sloth and corruption which pave the way for dictators. Truth requires that these facts be pointed out, and there is by no means any disservice to democracy in so doing. By learning the risks of freedom, citizens find out how to guard against them and how to amend constitutions so as to combine freedom with swift and decisive action when that is necessary. The realization of how far they fall short of their own standards is a spur to improvement. Just as a dictator may, by personal ability, govern his country better than it has been governed before and yet, because he is a dictator, set it on the wrong course: so a democracy may be ill governed and yet, because it is a democracy, it contains the possibility of improvement. To put the matter simply,

a democracy has a conscience—that is to say, citizens can arise, within the state, and question the morality of the government's actions. Teaching, particularly the teaching of the social sciences, awakens and strengthens this conscience.

Can the honest and non-propagandist teacher be neutral between dictatorship and democracy to-day? The proposition is a contradiction in terms. For let the teacher once say 'I will be impartial; I will not train the children to think just what I think, but rather to think and decide for themselves', and he commits himself to the democratic view. He is attempting an activity which no dictatorship would permit. In the past, education has been fostered by communities which were not democratic; but now that the choice is between democracy and the totalitarian state, the former has become a necessary condition of educational activity. If we agree that all propositions should be examined by reason and argument, how can we deny the democratic proposition that reason and argument are the proper instruments for the search for truth? So, since the teacher's own work, the free spirit of British education, and the future welfare of mankind depend on the maintenance of the democratic standards, the teacher, both directly in the social sciences and indirectly by his approach to other subjects, should seek to demonstrate by reason the validity of those standards, and to impart his own enthusiasm for them to his pupils. 'For a teacher to hold up definitely as admirable the doctrines of liberty, of reason and of love of our fellows, on which both our constitution and the moral standards of the community are ultimately based, should not lay him open to any charge of bias or undue indoctrination. Is it not rather a case of "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"?'[1]

[1] *Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools*, chap. iii, p. 31.

Intellect, Emotion, and Values.

Thus the promotion of democratic values is not achieved through the intellect alone. Many of the suggestions so far made can only be applied to a limited degree so long as the majority of our citizens leave school at 14, and only a small minority remain there beyond the age of 16. In view of the demands which democracy makes, democrats will naturally desire to extend educational facilities as rapidly as possible. Yet, even when this is achieved, there is the problem of those who, while far from being stupid, will always be slow at intellectual work. With these the teacher cannot obtain the full use of the method of discussion, nor develop a full appreciation of the importance of knowledge to human welfare. But they can be made aware of the world of human affairs and of the struggle for liberty that goes on in it. From the teacher's own example they can learn to be fair and tolerant, and to greet topics and ideas they have never heard of before with interest rather than with boredom or contempt. No one can fully grasp all the facts relevant to a complex problem of public affairs, many will have a grasp far less comprehensive than that of the intellectually gifted, but all can develop a standard of values favourable to liberty and kindness, and it is by such standards that, in the end, policies must be judged.

Something has been said of the development of a standard of values through the usual intellectual approach of school subjects. Much might also be done by direct moral training in ways suited to the varying intellectual capacities of different groups of pupils. English education has not made any very systematic study of methods of moral training, and an attempt to discuss such methods would be beyond the scope of this pamphlet. But it will be agreed that one object of such training should be to inspire a love for the civic virtues. The standards of conduct without which democracy cannot live—kindness, justice, love of truth, and a desire to make full use of

one's faculties—are those which teachers of morality and of religion will desire to see adopted by their pupils.

6. *Handling of Controversial Topics*

The Place of Controversial Topics.

Many teachers have hesitated to admit economics or politics into the curriculum because of the controversial nature of some of the subject-matter; and a similar fear has made them reluctant to approach current topics in their handling of other subjects. Reasons why controversial matter must be included were advanced earlier, and the subsequent suggestions as to method would be impacticable if such matter were ruled out. Yet a fear lest the classroom become a cockpit of ideas, and the pupils learn to argue before they can think, is reasonable. It remains, therefore, to show that the handling of controversy need not have these results, and that the necessity for it is not a drawback to the idea of public-spirited education, but an additional advantage. In adult classes, controversial matter must be handled; but even so, there is an alarm about them which produces the paralysis described by Mrs. Wootton.

In the first place, there is a point about which teachers may be reassured. They are not being asked to plunge headlong into controversy from the moment they introduce social sciences into the curriculum, or admit the desirability of relating other subjects to human welfare. Much of this pamphlet has been devoted to showing that there is a considerable preliminary stage of developing the constructive and critical faculties. If this task has been performed there is no need to fear that controversial matter will lead to mere wrangling. The school, because it can do the preliminary work, is perhaps the most suitable place for the discussion of controversial topics. The school might decide to stand aloof from these topics; but it cannot hope that the other forces

which influence children will observe such a 'non-intervention pact'. Suppose an election to be in progress. The pupils come to school along streets decorated with slogans; they may listen to speeches at the street-corner, or arguments among parents and neighbours; they may read election addresses and will certainly read newspapers. This propaganda is not intended for them, but they cannot avoid it. Its unsuitability is, in itself, a danger; the arguments, being phrased for adults, will be difficult to follow; the slogans, the vilification, and the whole apparatus of non-rational propaganda will be able to work unchecked. A teacher does not need much experience of teaching social sciences to learn how deep an impression these external influences make. The school can, if it will, provide the pupils with some knowledge of the machinery of government so that, at the least, they can detect the grosser extravagances of propaganda. It can allow the issues to be discussed in a setting where every one may be heard; where arguments can be related to facts learnt in earlier lessons, and where the sole object of the discussion is to seek the truth rather than to effect a conversion before polling-day. The school, and very often the school alone, can do this; if it fails, its profession of impartiality is a fugitive and cloistered virtue.

But if the introduction of controversy is to claim these merits, it must be systematically carried out. An occasional debate on politics, related to the rest of the school's work, is not sufficient. The value of the debate is that it exposes the arguments of each side to criticism; the debaters discover that their opponents have a case to be answered; they learn by trial and error the difficulties of intellectual honesty. Its chief limitation as an educational method is the stress it lays on partisanship. The speakers are tempted to desert the truth for the sake of winning a majority, and the audience may treat the affair as a sporting event. Teachers who assist school debating societies will find it helpful to give, possibly at the end of

each debate, a critical appreciation of the chief speeches. They can show where the issue has been clouded by irrelevancies, where fallacy has been used or sound argument left unanswered, and suggest sources whence further information on the disputed topic may be obtained. Another 'out-of-school' activity is the type of society which hears lectures from its own members and from visitors, and follows them by discussion. This, as a rule, requires rather more mental effort from the members than a debate; it calls more on the constructive faculties and is therefore a corrective for the educational weakness of that activity.

The view is sometimes taken that political controversy is permissible in the out-of-school activities, where attendance is voluntary, but undesirable in the classroom. This policy is based on the 'no politics in the school' slogan, and it has undesirable effects on the pupils' development. Political and economic questions have to be argued; but political and economic facts have to be learnt. Argument is interesting and exciting; but the excitement should resemble that of the explorer or inventor rather than that of the sportsman. If out-of-school controversy cannot be linked with school work the pupils will regard politics as a game. There are certain resemblances; but there is also a fundamental difference. It is an oft-repeated principle that in games it does not matter which side wins so long as the game is played well and fairly; are adolescents to approach politics in the belief that so long as speeches are clever and arguments logical, it does not matter which party is victorious? If so, the factual content of politics is being neglected, and the future citizen will not realize that he has a duty to seek for knowledge and judge the merits of policy. A school literary or scientific society is recognized as a continuation of intellectual adventure begun in school-lessons; a society concerned with public affairs should be in the same category.

The Avoidance of Bias.

How can the teacher avoid bias when handling controversial matter in lessons? The limits of time compel him to select his facts. In so doing, he will, of course, avoid wilful distortion. Further, he must be on his guard against unconscious bias. If, from the facts he has selected for presentation, controversial conclusions seem to follow, the selection must be reviewed. A useful exercise is to consider what facts could be quoted as evidence for a contrary conclusion; then to consider whether insufficient weight has not been given to these. In his lessons he must endeavour to show where the dividing line runs between matters of fact and matters of opinion, and what are the points at issue between disputing parties.

As to whether he refrains at the end from expressing his own point of view, or whether he states that on the available evidence he holds a particular opinion, is a matter on which there is a marked difference of view and of practice among teachers of controversial subjects—at least for pupils over fifteen.

With regard to younger children, less divergence of opinion exists. Most teachers agree that young children have not the material on which to base points of view of their own, and are therefore bound to be unduly influenced by an able and sympathetic teacher. Fortunately it is only on rare occasions—such as when an election in the neighbourhood is in train—that the points at which controversy arises are reached in their case. Owing to their youth and to the short time at the teacher's disposal, it is normally from the body of non-controversial material, and mainly from the descriptive angle, that lessons with regard to contemporary political and economic affairs are given.

But where older boys and girls and adults are concerned, the two points of view can be summed up as follows. Some teachers hold that as a rule the personal respect which the good teacher gains gives his opinion

undue weight, however anxious he may be to avoid such a result. Therefore, while encouraging the members of his class to express each his point of view, and himself describing points of view which have found no representative in the class, he never consciously gives any lead or expresses his own opinion.

The second school of thought argues that the older pupils with whom they are concerned will realize that respect for a person does not necessarily imply acceptance of his opinions. They further contend that the teacher whose subject is controversial can hardly fail to have opinions. If he is a good teacher he can reduce bias to a minimum, but, being human, he cannot free his subconscious mind from it entirely. If the class know what his opinions are, they will not credit him with an impartiality which neither he nor they can possess. They might consider it a lack of courage and of loyalty to his own views if—while they are encouraged to express their views—he alone of those taking part in the discussion fails to do so. The process of stating the reasons for his opinion, which will be subject to the criticism of the class, should indeed make the teacher more conscious of his own bias.

The problem is perhaps more difficult to state in theory than to solve in practice. Well-founded complaints with regard to political bias among the large number of teachers handling controversial material have been rare, and each teacher can solve the problem for himself, bearing in mind the age of his pupils and their experience in discussion. As long as discussion in the class is encouraged, and as long as all opinions command attention and thoughtful criticism, whether the teacher's own opinion is or is not included, the pupils learn something not only of the topic under discussion but about the way in which sensible people conduct an argument. They partake of the excitement of the search for truth, and realize that discussion is not only the most efficient

but the most interesting method of handling disputed points and reaching decisions.

The Value of Controversial Topics.

Democracy is a method of enabling people to choose peaceably between different ends. They cannot do this if they have been so trained that they automatically classify ideas into two classes, the good and the wicked. This facile habit, from which persecution springs, will not be formed if the pupils are early accustomed to the free discussion both of means and ends.

The presence of controversial topics in education does not need, therefore, to be excused. It is to be recommended as an instrument with which to overcome the chief enemy of free government—civic inertia, the lack of interest in public affairs, the basis on which tyrannies build.

Conclusion.

The proper handling of controversy is difficult; so is all teaching. This problem is simply the 'subject problem' of the social sciences. The teacher of chemistry must put acids and explosives into his pupils hands; it is one of the merits of his subject that it gives this opportunity for training in sensible conduct. Similarly, it is a positive advantage of the social sciences that they promote clear and unprejudiced thinking on disputed topics. The advantages to humanity of an increase in the number of people possessed of this power will be enormous; teachers are not likely to refuse their help because the task is difficult.

If from our educational system there come citizens who can think freely and act boldly; who can make decisions without prejudice, and be kind without weakness; who can bear gladly the responsibilities of liberty—then we may prove the falsity of the reproaches levelled at democratic education. Perhaps, by the force of example, we may check the spread of the ruthless doctrines which now threaten the peace of nations and the liberties of individuals.